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RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAY LIMA 3807
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 2845
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 9176
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4447
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2063
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 3566
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
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SUBJECT: FINAL ELECTORAL ROUNDUP

Classified By: PolCouns Jeffrey DeLaurentis, Reasons: 1.4 B & D.

11. (U) This is the last election roundup before presidential elections on Sunday, May 28.

12. (C) Uribe vs. Gaviria: The Polo's Carlos Gaviria appears to have positioned himself as the second-place finisher on May 28, despite the electoral machinery advantage of the Liberal Party (PLC) and its nominee, Horacio Serpa. While all indications are that Uribe will attain the necessary 50 plus percent to win in the first round, Gaviria could attain well over 20 percent of the vote. Presidential Communications Director Jaime Bermudez told A/S Shannon May 26 that his latest poll showed Uribe with 60 percent, Gaviria with 21 percent and Serpa with 5 percent. Bermudez predicted Uribe would ultimately get 54-56 percent, with 11 million turnout. In the last week, Gaviria has harshly criticized the Uribe campaign for allegedly planting press stories linking Gaviria to Hugo Chavez and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Drawing on allegations of vote fraud (under investigation by the Prosecutor General's Office) in 2002, Gaviria and Polo leaders claim the GOC is orchestrating an extra-legal, pro-Uribe vote push, using state resources. The Uribe campaign, meanwhile, has expressed concern that Polo has enlisted members of the national teachers union (many of whom will serve as poll station workers) to entice voters to cast ballots for Gaviria. Bermudez told Shannon that Polo had hired 3,000 taxis in Barranquilla on Sunday; in general, he said, the opposition candidates had outspent Uribe considerably.

13. (C) Tidbits from the Uribe Camp: In separate conversations with poloff, three pro-Uribe members of Congress (all re-elected in March) expressed some concern over the lack of vote mobilization efforts in favor of the President. Senator Manuel Guillermo Mora (National Unity Party, Norte de Santander Department), a former mayor of Cucuta (Norte de Santander), said the President's campaign was giving few resources to departmental campaign leaders to get out the vote. Instead, the campaign was putting virtually all funds into national-based media spots. Representative William Ortega (Radical Change Party,

Antioquia Department) expressed a similar concern and told poloff that Polo's Gaviria was making strong inroads in his department (Uribe's home turf). Representative Alfredo Cuello (Conservative Party, Cesar Department) stated that many pro-Uribe MOCs were paying mere lip service to the President in terms of promising votes on game day. Nevertheless, all three MOCs agreed Uribe would win in the first round, with 54 to 56 percent of the vote.

14. (SBU) Election Monitoring: Embassy election monitors will spend May 28 visiting polling stations in various locations in Bogota, Cali, Medellin, Barranquilla, and Bucaramanga. Representative Gregory Meeks (D-NY), invited by President Uribe, will also participate in election monitoring activities in Bogota. The National Electoral Council has rolled out the red carpet for international observers. Planned activities include meetings with all Presidential candidates. At meeting for election observers on May 25, Polo Party head Samuel Moreno warned of imminent fraud (in favor of Uribe) and complained that electoral entities were void of Polo representation. German Vargas Lleras and Carlos Holguin, heads of the Radical Change and Conservative parties, refuted Moreno and argued that transparency was guaranteed. The OAS has released a preliminary report praising Colombian election preparations and technical assistance provided to international observers.

15. (U) Voting Logistics - Finger Inking and Tally Issues: The National Registrar (Registraduria), the entity charged with overseeing the elections, made two procedural announcements May 25. First, voters' fingers will be marked with ink to avoid multiple voting attempts. Second, votes for Alvaro Leyva, the National Reconciliation Movement

candidate who withdrew from the race on May 13, will be counted for voter turnout totals.

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